

To the Urban Sanitary Authority, Wantage.

GENTLEMEN,

In compliance with the orders of the Local Government Board, I beg to submit for your consideration, my Annual Report for 1904, dealing with the Sanitary conditions of the District, of which I am Medical Officer of Health.

## GEOLOGY.

The area is 2,296 acres.

The Geological formation in the Southern part is chalk, in the Northern part, upper green sand.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

The population at the last census (1901) was 3,766, and estimated to date is 3,791. The census of 1881 numbered 3,488: thus there is an increase of population in 20 years of 278, or nearly 14 per annum.

## DEATHS.

The Deaths registered in the District numbered 76, equal to a rate of 20 per 1,000, of these 21 were over 60 years of age, and 10 were under one year of age.

Deducting 22, who died either in the Cottage Hospital or Union Workhouse, and not resident in the District, we have 54 deaths, equal to a rate of 14 per 1,000.

## BIRTHS.

The Births amounted to 71, equal to 18.7 per 1,000.

This is the lowest birth rate for many years, and the figures shew the uncomfortable and unusual fact that the death rate is higher than the birth rate.

## NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

The following were reported to me during the year:—

*Diphtheria* 11, all recovered.  
*Erysipelas* 24, ditto.  
*Scarlet Fever* 8, ditto.  
*Enteric Fever* 3, all died.

Total 46

## DEATHS FROM INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Compared with the previous five years the figures are:—

	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904
Enteric Fever ...			1		1	3
Diphtheria ...						
Influenza ...	5	3	6	2	4	
Scarlet Fever ...		1				
Measles ...						4
Erysipelas ...						
Whooping Cough ...	3			1		
Puerperal Fever ...						

#### ENTERIC FEVER.

Three cases were reported during the year. This compares with twenty during the previous year.

No sanitary defects were found in or near the infected premises.

#### INFLUENZA.

This disease was very prevalent the first quarter and the last month of the year. To those who are predisposed to it, it ought to be known that a small dose of Quinine daily is in ninety-five out of a hundred cases an efficient preventative, and in the other five the disease is in a mild and modified form.

#### SMALL POX.

No case of this disease occurred during the year.

#### DIPHTHERIA.

Eleven cases were reported, all recovered.

#### WATER SUPPLY.

The water from the Company's mains continues pure, and is a first-class drinking water. The large proportion of wells being supplied by surface water are more or less impure, but even the most tainted can be rendered harmless by boiling.

#### SEWAGE AND SCAVENGING.

The new system of drainage appears to be working satisfactorily, and the quality of the effluent has satisfied the Thames Conservancy.

I wish to call the attention of the Urban Authority to the dust nuisance; dust being a fertile source of disease, more particularly of *Consumption* and various Bronchial affections, and under certain conditions of *Enteric Fever* and *Diphtheria*.

I would suggest during dry, windy weather a more liberal use of water containing some Germicide.

#### FOOD.

My attention has not been called to any case where unsound or unwholesome food has been exposed for sale.

#### HOUSE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE WORKING CLASSES.

This is fairly good, and there is very little overcrowding, the average number of persons to each house being between four and five.

Well-built, better ventilated houses are gradually replacing unhealthy hovels.

#### OFFENSIVE TRADES.

None exist in the District.

#### FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS' ACT, 1901.

The Factories and Workshops appear to comply with the provisions of the Statute, as regards drainage, cleanliness, air space, ventilation, and sanitary conveniences. The bakehouses appear to be well-managed and none are underground.

I have made Systematic Inspection of my District as required by the Local Government Board.

I have much pleasure in stating that Mr. Belcher has given prompt and valuable help in carrying out my orders.

SUMMARY OF WORK DONE DURING THE YEAR.

Houses inspected	...	...	...	120
Drains, Sewers, &c., inspected	...	...	...	43
Wells examined	...	...	...	27
Samples of Water examined	...	...	...	40

Appended are the usual Tables of Statistics and Mr. Belcher's Report.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS G. EMERSON, M.D.,

*Medical Officer of Health.*

*February 24th, 1905.*

